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PARTY CONTROL IN SOVIET INDUSTRIAL ENTERPRISES

[Comment: The following report discusses some aspects of party control in Soviet industrial enterprises, citing examples of party activities at several large plants. The plants discussed are the "Dinamo" Plant in Moscow, the Second State Moscow Bearing Plant, the Moscow Motor Vehicle Plant imeni Stalin, and the Plant imeni Zhdanov in Leningrad.]

Numbers in parentheses refer to appended sources.]

As stated by D. Goginava, party organizer of the Central Committee of the Communist Party at the "Dinamo" Plant in Moscow, the successful operation of this plant is due in great measure to the correct and skilled control of the plant administration by the party organization. The party organization has directed all of its efforts toward the fulfillment of the Five-Year Plan ahead of schedule.

The right of control, established by the party bylaws, obliges the party organization to study the essential factors in the work of an enterprise; to study and improve the distribution of personnel and the utilization of equipment and materials; to analyze the organization of accounting and supply; to check the execution by the enterprise of party and government directives, and to watch continuously over the fulfillment of production plans.

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Only if a party organization fully understands the obligations arising from its right to control the activities of a plant administration, will it be able to make a correct analysis of the problems requiring special attention. For example, during the difficult period of conversion to peacetime civilian production, operations at the "Dinamo" Plant were characterized by the "last minute rush," where the first 10 days of the month were spent on preparations, and where 65 to 70 percent of the month's production plan was fulfilled in the last 8 to 10 days of the month. As a result of this kind of operation, equipment and workers were idle during certain periods, production capacities were not fully utilized, and funds were needlessly spent for overtime work.

In 1948, the operation of the "Dinamo" Plant improved somewhat, but it still failed to produce the necessary equipment according to plan. The party organization could no longer tolerate this production lag, and found it necessary to make a detailed study of the reasons for these irregularities, to determine what shortcomings existed in the management of production, and prepare a clear, definite plan to insure the fulfillment of the work schedule.

The party committee of the plant organized a special commission, consisting of a large number of active party and administrative workers, to determine the reasons for work inefficiencies and to work out measures for putting the plant operation on a definite work schedule.

There had been serious shortcomings and deficiencies in intraplant and intrashop planning. Frequently, the production planning division included the output of certain machines or types of equipment in the production plan of a given shop, without having planned the preparation of the necessary parts or semifinished products by the preliminary processing shops.

The material and technical supply division also operated inefficiently. Necessary materials were often received after a long delay and not always in satisfactory condition.

The commission of the party committee invited Stakhanovites, foremen, and shop and division chiefs to take part in the campaign; a careful study of organizational shortcomings were made and all suggestions received from the participants were taken into consideration. After this preliminary study, the problem of proper work organization at the plant was discussed at an expanded meeting of the party committee. The Communist Party members severely criticized the plant administration and the work of the production-planning and supply divisions. The party committee assisted the plant administration in working out an effective plan for converting to a definite work schedule and for organizing a campaign to meet the production schedule.

The role of shop party organizations in controlling the activity of the administration and in mobilizing all workers to strive for fulfillment of the production plan is also very important. The Communist Party members working in different shops have daily contact with the other workers and, being closer to actual production, can see the shortcomings more clearly. The "Dinamo" Plant has about 30 primary shop party organizations. This represents a very strong force which supports the party committee in controlling the work of the plant administration.

The following example proves what tremendous influence a shop party organization may have on the course of production if the right of party control is correctly used. A certain shop of the plant was operating very unsatisfactorily. The shop chief was unable to cope with his work and attempted to make excuses for failure to fulfill the plan. The shop party organization submitted the matter of improving the shop management to the director and the party committee. The plan director agreed with the opinion of the shop party

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organization and appointed an able and energetic administrator, a Communist Party member, to the position of shop chief. However, the party organization realized that a change in shop chiefs alone was not sufficient. The shop was generally in bad condition: labor discipline was low, intrashop planning was poor, and there were no clear-cut work assignments for individual sections and no definite responsibility for the fulfillment of the work. The technical personnel did not try to improve work techniques and the work was done in a haphazard way.

A party meeting was held to discuss the report of the new shop chief on ways to increase the shop's output. All workers agreed to work according to a definite schedule. The party organization directed all of its mass-political and organizational activities toward the fulfillment of the daily work schedule. The schedule demanded complete coordination between all sections of the shop. The shop chief required the senior foremen to make daily reports. The party bureau made a daily check on the progress of work schedule fulfillment.

Labor discipline had also been unsatisfactory. The shop party organization gave special attention to indifferent workers who hindered the fulfillment of the daily work quotas. These workers were subjected to a great deal of political and educational training. Labor discipline soon improved and the output of the shop increased.

The party bureau carefully checked the fulfillment of the plan for technical and organizational measures. With the help of the shop party bureau, a certain worker's suggestion for improving production was speedily put into practice, doubling labor productivity.

In another instance, a worker's suggestion was turned down by the chief technologist. The shop party organization, after reviewing the suggestion, submitted the matter to the chief engineer of the plant and succeeded in having it approved and put into practice.

The party organizations of various shops are in close contact with each other and thus help to dispose of any difficulties or avoid delays in the delivery of parts or semifinished products from one shop to another, and prevent any disruption in the plant's production.

At the suggestion of the party organization, short meetings concerning production problems are held daily in the machine section of a shop, and every 10 days in other shop sections. Such meetings help to disclose and eliminate shortcomings at an early date.

The plant party committee carries out daily control of the activity of shop party organizations and party groups; the committee makes suggestions of the leading party members on matters deserving special attention and listens to reports of party group organizers and party bureau secretaries at the committee meetings. Special attention is given by the party committee and by the whole party organization of a plant to the question of profitability, lowering of production costs, reduction of waste, and cost accounting.

One of the decisions of an all-plant party meeting at the "Dinamo" Plant contains the following statement with regard to cost accounting: "Despite repeated decisions of party organs, not a single shop at the plant is operating on a cost accounting basis. The director must be instructed to work out measures for converting the shops to cost accounting at the earliest possible date. Strict control must be introduced over the expenditures of raw materials and other materials, fuel, tools, and electric power. The plans for reduction of production costs and for speeding up the turnover of monetary funds must be fulfilled."

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However, a decision by itself, no matter how good, will only remain a decision on paper if its execution is not supervised. To prevent this from happening in the above-mentioned case, the party organizations of the plant administration and of the technical divisions, at the direction of the party committee, assumed daily control over the work of the administration as it pertained to the introduction of cost accounting. A great deal of the work had to be done by the division of the chief technologist, the production planning division, the labor and wages division, and the bookkeeping office.

On the initiative of the party organization, a schedule was prepared for introducing cost accounting in all shops of the plant. This schedule is constantly checked by the party committee and the shop party organizations, whose ultimate aim is to convert every shop, including auxiliary shops, to cost accounting.

The party organization of the chief power engineer's division gives special attention to problems of economizing electric power.

Sometimes individual plant managers try to avoid certain work assignments involving too much risk or too much effort. In such cases, the party organization takes steps to remedy the situation.

Any error made by an administrative worker of a plant, or any neglect of state interests, is severely criticized by the Communist workers at party meetings. The party organization is obliged to censure administrative workers who neglect to keep in personal daily contact with their subordinate workers and who do not take an interest in promoting advanced work methods, but who remain satisfied with individual work records.

Problems connected with socialist competition are regularly discussed at meetings of the party committee, at meetings of active party and administrative workers, at shop party meetings, and in party groups.

Control by the party organization is, essentially, control by the workers themselves. The party organization makes use of all means to educate and to organize the workers, including party meetings, party assignments, meetings of the party and administrative active, discussions among Communist workers, general workers' meetings and all forms of agitation and propaganda. The participation of Communist Party members and of wide masses of workers in the discussion of production problems and in the elimination of shortcomings is the most powerful factor in developing a high sense of responsibility in the workers for the work of the enterprise.

Practical experience has shown that a correct and effective control of economic activity is possible only when the entire party work is on a high level. For this reason, the party organization of the "Dinamo" Plant tries to raise the ideological and political level of the Communist workers and to improve the political mass education of all workers.(1)

In the Second State Moscow Bearing Plant, the party bureau has instructed the plant director, his deputies, the shop chiefs, and the division chiefs to give reports on the most important questions confronting the plant at any given time at party bureau meetings and general meetings. The discussion of such reports in the party bureau aids the plant management in exposing shortcomings and omissions in the work of the plant and in planning ways to eliminate the shortcomings.

The party organization frequently discusses problems concerning the observance of work schedules in various shops, the steady output of commodities, the introduction of cost accounting, better utilization of equipment, and increased production per square meter of production area.

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The party bureau holds a meeting of the party and administrative aktiv no less than once a month or once every 6 weeks. These meetings are one of the forms of control over the activity of the plant management. The decisions of these meetings refer to the chief shortcomings in the work of each shop, and indicate in what manner and within what period of time the shortcomings are to be eliminated. The party bureau sees that the decisions of the meetings are put into practice.(2)

At the Moscow Motor Vehicle Plant imeni Stalin, a number of party members have criticized the plant director for violating party principles in selecting administrative personnel. The Communist workers also criticized the chief of the capital construction division and the chief of the housing division for their inefficient operation. The party committee passed several resolutions instructing the director to reinforce the personnel of these divisions.(3)

The party committee of the [shipbuilding] Plant imeni Zhdanov in Leningrad concentrated its main attention in 1948 on the speedy introduction of new production techniques which would make possible the rapid construction of high-quality ships at low cost. With these problems in mind, the committee held an all-plant party meeting to give the necessary guidance to the newly founded special technological bureau in working out new techniques required in converting to the constant-flow method of shipbuilding. The party organization reinforced this technological bureau with leading technologists and designers who would be capable of solving complex problems.

At the suggestion of the party meeting, and for the purpose of carrying out systematic party control of the activity of this technological bureau, an independent party organization was formed in the bureau which assured the correct distribution of party forces in vital positions. Party orders given to Communist workers were directed mainly at solving especially complex and difficult problems presented by the new technology. A great number of such party orders were issued in the process of developing the new techniques. The new improved techniques were finally worked out by a group of technologists and designers headed by a Communist, Engineer Golland, and made it possible to introduce series production of ships, reducing by 80-percent the time required for the production of one unit.

After the first stage of the work, i.e. the development of new techniques, had been completed, the second important stage in the work was begun. This involved putting the new techniques into practice. Conversion of the plant to new production methods could not take place suddenly and without overcoming some difficulties. Here, as usual, the struggle between the old and the new began immediately. The party organization had to overcome the opposition of several conservative engineering and technical workers and individual leading shop workers who were unwilling to take risks and discard the old methods, and who resisted the new methods in every way. Some of the old, skilled production workers were also in favor of the old methods, realizing that the new techniques would result in higher labor productivity and erroneously assuming that this would lead to the loss of their high earnings.

The party organization was faced with the task of proving, both in theory and in practice, the inferiority of the old methods and it set out to break the resistance of the conservative workers.

The first step in this campaign was to hold a closed meeting of the shop party organization concerned. At this meeting a theoretical problem was posed on the subject, "What Does Dialectical Materialism Teach the Party?" apparently a somewhat abstract problem. The Communist workers were given an explanation of the basic principles of dialectical materialism, the normal course of social development, and especially the problem involving the struggle between the new and the old. In the course of these explanations, the Communist workers who had hindered the introduction of new techniques were subjected to criticism.

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Following this, a theoretical conference was held by the party committee with the participation of the party and administrative aktiv, the subject of the conference being, "The Socialist System of Economy and Its Natural Development." During this conference, convincing arguments were offered to prove that continuous technical progress and the introduction of new, improved production methods is one of the basic laws of development in the Soviet society.

As a result of this educational work, the majority of the conservative workers realized their error and began to take an active part in the introduction of new techniques. In the case of a few leading workers who continued to show stubborn resistance and to hinder progress, the committee was forced to remove them from their posts and to transfer them to less responsible positions where they could not effectively obstruct the introduction of new methods. The vacant positions in the shop were filled with Communists who had proved to be energetic and had shown initiative.

The campaign to instruct the workers in using new techniques included oral instruction and visual aids, all types of agitation, radio broadcasts, and especially plant newspapers. The all-plant wall newspaper severely criticized negligent workers who hindered the adoption of new methods.(4)

In general, the primary party organization of any enterprise has the right to control the activity of the administration. This right of control is not limited to the discussion of reports submitted by production chiefs or to the issuance of decisions on these reports, but involves daily work of party organizations with administrative personnel and the education of workers in the spirit of party principles and the observance of state interests. In exercising control over the activity of a plant administration, the party proceeds from the concept that politics is inseparable from economics. Control by the party organization combines the principle of one-man management with daily party supervision.(5)

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